condemned all acts, methods,and practices of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious, or any other purported causes that may be invoked to justify them. India and the United States have also agreed to co-operate on India's proposal in the United Nations for a comprehensive convention on all forms of international terrorism.

US proposals to bring about closer relationship between India and Pakistan

2946. SHRI C. M. IBRAHIM : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether during his recent visit to New Delhi and stopover in Islamabad, the US President had discussed any specific-proposals purported to bring about closer relationship between India and Pakistan.

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the Government's reaction thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) During his visit to India and stopover in Islamabad, the US President expressed hope for resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan.

(b) The US President reiterated that the US does not seek to mediate between India and Pakistan. He outlined the US position urging restraint, respect for the Line of Control, refraining from violence and for renewed lines of communication. He also stated that Pakistan must help create conditions for a bilateral dialogue to succeed.

(c) The Government has always been committed to resolving its differences with neighbours through peaceful bilateral dialogue in an atmosphere free from the threat of force and violence.

Clinton's views on South Asia

2947. SHRI H. K. JAVARE GOWDA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that at one point of time US President Clinton described that South Asia as the most dangerous place in the world;

(b) whether Government have taken it in a lighter prospective; and

(c) if so, the details thereof;

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) Government is aware of the comments attributed to President Clinton on the situation in South Asia, including his description of the region as the most dangerous place in the world.

(b) and (c) No, Sir. India has demonstrated its resolve and capacity to safeguard its interests in a restrained and responsible manner. There is now a better appreciation by the United States of India's restraint in dealing with persistent provocation from Pakistan. Government has also conveyed to the international community, including the United States, that it must direct its concerns on tensions in South Asia to persuading Pakistan to abjure violence, terrorism and hostile propaganda against India and respect the bilateral agreements it has solemnly entered into. Government is committed to resolving all problems with our neighbours through peaceful bilateral dialogue.

India's Global Image

2948. SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether India's image has improved globally after Clinton's visit;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken to counter Pakistan's anti-India stand ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PAJNA) : (a) and (b) A visit by a US President to India was an important international event. There was, therefore, considerable international interest in the visit. President Clinton's visit to India provided the US and the international community the opportunity to see India's diversity, the strength of its democratic institutions, its economic and technological dynamism, its social and political progress as well as the wide-ranging opportunities that exist for mutually beneficial co-operation.

(c) Government uses every bilateral and multilateral opportunity to apprise the international community of Pakistan's support and sponsorship of cross-border terrorism and its hostile propaganda against India. Government has also initiated co-operation with a number of countries on measures to combat terrorism. A Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism has been set up with the United States to intensify co-operation in this area.